

4. Subbasin Assessment – Summary of Past and Present Pollution Control Efforts

The extent to which implementation of the NPDES program has reduced pollutant wasteloads in the subbasin is unknown, but most likely substantial. The program has, at the very least, caused dischargers to be cognizant of the constituent make-up of their effluent.

Much work has been expended to reduce shoreline erosion in American Falls Reservoir and the resulting loss of valuable cropland. BOR tried several methods (e.g., posts/tires and posts/fence) to control shoreline erosion. A combination of geotextile material and rock rip-rapping had the most success, but proved expensive (Hoag and Short 1992). To reduce costs, BOR began work with the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Aberdeen to find a vegetative solution to erosion control. Willow plantings have been successful in some areas, and the two agencies continue to work on refining planting techniques to reduce costs and increase plant survival. Of the 85 miles of shoreline around the reservoir that has been identified as being in highly erodible soils, 53 miles are considered to be highly erosive (Alicia Lane Boyd, Bureau of Reclamation/Burley, personal communication). BOR has placed 15 miles of rock or other nonerodible material in these areas, and performed erosion control work on an additional 20 miles of shoreline. Another 18 miles of shoreline is scheduled to have erosion control work done in the future.

Sampson et al. (2001) and Bureau of Reclamation (2002) quantified and evaluated stream bank erosion and channel changes in Snake River. Some recommendations in Sampson et al. (2001) were implemented such as rock barbs and constructed log jams (Candon Tanaka, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, personal communication).

Water quality in Bannock Creek watershed has benefited from a couple of projects and programs. Considerable improvement in stream bank stability has been achieved in the West Fork subwatershed of Bannock Creek since the riparian corridor has been completely fenced off from livestock (Candon Tanaka, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, personal communication). The federal Conservation Reserve Program has resulted in a decrease in the acreage of dryland farming in the uplands (off reservation) at the headwaters of Bannock Creek, which most likely has decreased sediment and nutrient loading to the creek.

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